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NOTES.

THE recent appointment of Professor Maffeo Pantaleoni to the chair of political economy in the largest of the Italian universities, that at Naples, must be a source of satisfaction to all who are interested in the teaching of this subject. The appointment means something more than the selection of a man of marked ability to fill an important position. It indicates that other forces are stronger than the political influence which was powerful enough to secure the resignation of Professor Pantaleoni from the post of director in the technological school at Bari, and to keep the chair at Naples vacant for more than a year, because he was almost sure to be selected when the choice was made.

Readers of the *Giornale degli Economisti* are familiar with the uncompromising manner in which Professor Pantaleoni and his associates have maintained the fight against corruption in governmental affairs, and against unsound measures of legislation. The fight has seemed a rather hopeless one, and for that reason all the more credit should be given for the pluck with which it has been maintained.

It was for a vigorous attack upon corrupt officials, who were dealing in warrants or certificates for drawbacks of taxes, to be paid on the reëxportation of certain articles, that the pressure was applied which led to Professor Pantaleoni's resignation from the post at Bari. The same pressure was doubtless exercised to the fullest extent to prevent his appointment at Naples. But, fortunately, the appointments in the royal universities of Italy are not in the hands of politicians. The method of selection is an admirable one, as the result in the present instance proves. When a vacancy occurs a board is chosen to select the man to fill it. In the selection of the board, and so in filling the vacancy, all who are supposed to be in a position to vote with most intelligence have a voice. The vote is not given by the faculty of the university where the vacancy occurs. That might favor home products, either alumni or men who are on the ground. Nor is it left to all men who hold chairs in Italian universities. What does a member of the medical faculty know or care about the appointment of a professor of

political economy or Greek? But all professors of political economy are interested in selecting a good man to teach that subject. Therefore each professor in the several Italian universities belonging to the faculty, be it law, medicine, or theology, where the choice is to be made, names the five men whom he thinks best fitted to decide the question. The votes are counted, and the five men whom most professors have confidence in form the board. Anyone is free to compete for the position, and applications are invited by public advertisement. In the case of an important post, like that at Naples, the competition is particularly active, including many of Italy's leading economists. The decision is made after careful consideration of the published work of each applicant, with some attention to other evidences of his ability, and is virtually an acknowledgment of the primacy of the one chosen. Therefore the present appointment may well be a source of satisfaction to Professor Pantaleoni and his friends, as well as a cause of rejoicing to all who favor freedom in speech and writing.

THE USE AND VALUE OF CENSUS STATISTICS.

IN his *Growth of Capital*, Robert Giffen enters an "emphatic protest against the heedless, off-hand use of statistics; "country has been compared with country and period with period in the most reckless fashion without any attention to the comparability of the data." That some such warning is not uncalled for is forcibly brought to our attention by Mr. Mulhall's recent paper on "Power and Wealth of the United States."¹ This writer's standing as a popularly accepted expositor of statistical matters, as well as the currency obtained by the conclusions which he reaches in the paper in question, must serve as apology for a critical examination of the methods by which these conclusions are reached. Such an examination is all the more in place, since the unparalleled prosperity which Mr. Mulhall finds to prevail in this country, especially in manufacturing industry, seems to be contradicted by a pretty widespread discontent among those who are said to enjoy this prosperity. Indeed, this apparent contradiction suggests the ungracious possibility that there may be a large element of fiction contained in the alleged facts which the author declares "are undoubtedly of the highest importance to the human race."

¹ *North American Review*, June 1895.